

**FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION**  
**FREEDOM OF INFORMATION/PRIVACY ACTS SECTION**  
**COVER SHEET**

**SUBJECT: CLARK GABLE**

Los Angeles, California  
November 2, 1937

Special Agent in Charge,  
CLEVELAND, OHIO

Re: CLARA GABLE - VICTIM.  
Extortion

b7C

Dear Sir:

There is attached hereto the original of a letter directed to MR. CLARA GABLE, motion picture star, which letter was postmarked Barberton, Ohio, October 20, 1937, and which reads as follows:

Time 12:00  
Room  
Barberton,  
Ohio.

Dear Mr. Gable:-

I suppose you think this is another movie fan letter but it is not. Through my travels over this week end, I've found you a very interesting subject for me.

I have watched you on the screen and studied you and have it down pat. In fact I study personalities, you have it in other words personality.

I am a ambitious girl. I know but young lady, have technique, polished also can tap very good all by ear or with the eye, sing with musicality. - rich dancer, beauty musical. did too soon work worked in exclusive dress shops. Do all this well but change from one to the other to get a different ambitious case in a while.

RECORDED & INDEXED  
I find life very interesting, and it would be long enough for me.

Find me interesting, fascinating,

79-3171-1

NOV 2 1937

FILE

SAC  
Cleveland

November 2, 1937

(Original letter - continued,

My mind before not to fall in love.

I am a truthful, lovely, nice and respectable  
lady, high standing in life.

Now I have a story which could break your  
letter in just a few words. I could lay my hands on  
this person who is or was a very close associate of  
your younger in life that gave me this story. It  
has never occurred to him what could be done with that.  
But understand I am keeping this story to myself un-  
til I get further notice from you to run into action.

I would just take no three hrs time to get  
this man to my side. He will do this if I ask him.  
But I am keeping this undisturbed until you give me  
sign to do otherwise.

I have something which I want to show Holly-  
wood or other words have something there.

Now I'm asking you to get me a more favor to get  
up to Hollywood, meet me, take me to a producer and  
show him what I have.

Where this is merely a drop in the bucket to  
you, it is the world to me. It can mean a lot to you  
or it can mean a career for me. It can break you, or  
make you, I would like to talk right to you.

This isn't much to ask of you, if you know  
this story.

Now understand I'm not trying to trick you but  
just help you to get up to the top. If you want to  
to drop and have this over to the headquarters of  
which I could tell you I'm a lady and a very objective  
one about it. It is too much although nice - Quantile.

SAC  
Cleveland

November 2, 1937

(Original letter - continued)

then started.

I will look for answer immediately - give  
until next Thursday to get on my way and meet me  
there as if not I will publish this in every news-  
paper in the country - mean your career. Nothing to  
be and have wrecked you. You are a value to your  
producer now. If this get into your secretary's  
hands, she had better get this to you immediately  
as when this is all published you know if I wanted  
to talk nothing could stop me.

- Nothing. It will be published. I am a very  
true loving friend

Over  
[REDACTED]

You know the newspapers want stories about  
men like you.

[REDACTED]  
Richardson

(This

now if you want to show this to headquarters but when  
I was through those police would feel the same as  
everyone else will if you do not do this favor for me.

You will note that the writer of the let-  
ter signed her name [REDACTED]  
Richardson, Ohio.

SAC  
Cleveland

November 2, 1937

The above letter was turned over to this office on November 2, 1937 by Mr. I. H. PHINZMAN of the Legal Department of the M.G.M. Studios located in Culver City, California, with which studio Mr. GABIA is affiliated.

It is possible that there is no violation of the Espionage Statute involved in this matter. However, it is suggested that you determine if the United States Attorney in your district would institute prosecution in this case. If so, conduct an appropriate investigation. If prosecution is not authorized, it is requested that your office interview the writer of the letter and request her to desist from sending such letters through the mails.

The Los Angeles Office has not as yet determined who has handled this communication, but it will do so depending on the action taken by your office.

Very truly yours,

J. E. HANICH,  
Special Agent in Charge.

RECEIVED  
Nov.

cc-Bureau (3)

(2 Cleveland)  
(2 File)

ALL MAIL  
SPECIAL DELIVERY

**Federal Bureau of Investigation  
United States Department of Justice**

Los Angeles, California

November 11, 1937

Director  
Federal Bureau of Investigation  
Washington, D. C.

Dear Sir:

RE:

Clark Gable, Victim

EXTORTION - L. A. File 9-227

Reference is made to the letter from this office to the Cleveland office, dated November 2, 1937.

It has been determined that the following people connected with the Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Studios have handled the letter mentioned in the above communication:

The fingerprints of [redacted] have previously been forwarded to the Civil Fingerprint Section of this bureau, and enclosed are the [redacted]

In the event the Cleveland office has forwarded the original letter in this case to the Bureau, it is suggested that the fingerprints of the above named individuals be compared with any latents developed on this letter.

In view of the number of extortion letters which are received through the Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Studios, [redacted] of the Legal Staff arranged for the fingerprinting of all employees of the film section and others who might open and touch incoming letters. In this connection, there are being forwarded for inclusion in the Civil Fingerprint Section, the fingerprints of the [redacted] employees of Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Studios.

9-227-2  
HARRIS E. [redacted] INVESTIGATION  
[redacted]  
[redacted]  
[redacted]  
[redacted]

## 4442

# Single Fingerprint Report

**Number:** 9-5178-2

Submitted the fingerprint cards of [REDACTED] and [REDACTED], for elimination purposes.  
Requested that the fingerprint cards of [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] whose prints are on file in the Civil Identification file, be compared with the latents developed in this case for the purpose of eliminate them.  
Submitted the fingerprint cards of the following persons to be filed in the Civil Identification file.

Date received: Nov. 15, 1937

Examination requested: Fingerprint

**Result of examination:**

**Examination by:**

so Cleveland

*[Handwritten notes:]*

sent for [unclear] [unclear]  
from [unclear] from [unclear]  
[unclear] [unclear] [unclear] [unclear] [unclear] [unclear]  
[unclear] [unclear] [unclear] [unclear] [unclear] [unclear]  
[unclear] [unclear] [unclear] [unclear] [unclear] [unclear]

17/10

**Federal Bureau of Investigation  
United States Department of Justice**

1448 Standard Building  
Cleveland, Ohio

November 12, 1937.

Director,  
Federal Bureau of Investigation,  
Washington, D. C.

Re: [REDACTED] b7C  
CLARK GABLE, VICTIM;  
EXTORTION.

Dear Sir:

Reference is made to letter to the Cleveland Office  
from the Los Angeles Office, dated November 2, 1937.

Attached hereto is original extortion letter di-  
rected to Mr. Clark Gable, Paramount Studio, Hollywood,  
California, postmarked at Barberton, Ohio, October 29, 1937,  
and bearing return address of [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED], Barberton, Ohio, a/o [REDACTED] b7C

In view of the fact that the United States Attorney  
at Cleveland, Ohio, has declined prosecution in this matter,  
no fingerprint examination of this letter is requested. How-  
ever, it is suggested that the handwriting in this letter be  
compared with the handwriting in other extortion notes now on  
file at the Bureau, for the purpose of determining whether  
[REDACTED] wrote other extortion letters which may  
have come to the attention of this Bureau. b7C

Instant letter reads as follows:

Time 12:00  
Place  
Barberton,  
Ohio.

Dear Mr. Gable:

RECORDED

9-3178-3

I suggest you think this is a letter to you  
and that it is not. I am sure you will be  
interested in this information.  
Sincerely,  
[REDACTED]



Director

-2-

11/11/37

I have watched you on the screen and studied you and have it down pat. In fact I study personalities, you have it in other words technique.

I am a sophisticated misogynist. I know but young lady, have technique, polished also can tap very good all by ear or with the eye, sing with organs, - pythia dancer, beauty operator. did too room work worked in exclusive dress shops. Do all this well but change from one to the other to get a different atmosphere once in a while.

I find life very interesting, and it couldn't be long enough for me.

Find men interesting, fascinating, but not my kind before not to fall in love.

I am a truthful, lovely, nice respectable you lady, high standing in life.

Now I have a story which could break your letter in just a few words. I could lay my hands on this person who is or was a very close associate of yours younger in life that gave me this story. It has never occurred to him what could be do with that. But understand I am keeping this story to myself until I get further notice from you to run into action.

I would just take me three hrs time to get this man to my side. He will do this if I ask him. But I am keeping this undisturbed until you give me room to do otherwise.

I have something which I want to show Hollywood or other words have something there.

Now I'm asking you you as a mere favor to get me to Hollywood, meet me, take me to a producer and show him what I have.

Where this is merely a drop in the bucket to you, it is the world to me. It can mean a lot to you or it can mean a career for me. It can break you, or make you, I would like to talk right to you.

Director

-3-

This isn't much to ask of you, if you know this story.

Now understand I'm not trying to trick you nor want help you to get me to the top. If you want to be dirty and hand this over to the headquarters of which I still tell you I'm a lady and a very attractive one about 5 ft. 2 1/2 in low heels although nice - dynamite when started.

I will look for answer immediately - give until next Thursday to get me my way and meet me there as if not I will publish this in every newspaper in the country - ruin your career. Nothing to me and have wrecked you. You are a value to your producer now. If this get into your secretary's hands, she hand better get this to you immediately as when this is all published you know if I wanted to talk nothing could stop me.

Nothing. It will be published. I am a very true loving friend

Over

You know the newspapers want stories about men like you.

Barberton  
Ohio

now if you want to show this to headquarters but when I was through those police would feel the same as everyone else will if you do not do this favor for me.

Very truly yours,

T. M. Stapleton  
T. M. STAPLETON  
Special Agent in Charge.

STP:CE  
Encs. 3  
2-99

14  
Cand. 14 - Los Angeles

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION  
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

Laboratory Report

Case: [REDACTED] b7C

Number: 6-176-7

Specimens:

1. One sheet written in pencil and reads: "I suppose you--"  
2. One sheet written in pencil and reads: "technique. I am--"  
3. One sheet written in pencil and reads: "for the. Wind--"  
4. One sheet written in pencil and reads: "could be do--"  
5. One sheet written in pencil and reads: "you as a --"  
6. One sheet written in pencil and reads: "you but want--"  
7. One sheet written in pencil and reads: "your career. Nothing--"

Examination requested by: Cleveland

Date received: (Blocked and recorded 11-17-57 3:30 P.M. hr)

Examination requested: Document - Fingerprinting

Result of examination:

- Q-1: One sheet written in pencil and reads: "you know the--"  
Q-2: One envelope postmarked "Canton, Ohio, Oct. 20 4:30 P.M."

*Compared with anonymous letter file  
no ident.*

Q-1: One sheet

Q-1: 5.00" x 7.99" .0042" thick, white  
linen finish, No. 100. Wt. 2.3629

Q-2: 5.00" x 7.99" .0042" thick, white  
linen finish, No. 100. Wt. 2.3001

Q-3: 5.00" x 7.99" .0042" thick, white  
finish, No. 100.

Q-4: 5.00" x 7.99" .0042" thick, white  
linen finish, No. 100.

Q-5: 5.00" x 7.99" .0042" thick, white  
linen finish, No. 100.

Q-6 5.00"  $\leftrightarrow$ ; 7.99"  $\updownarrow$ ; .0037" thick,  
white linen finish, None

Q-7:- 7.99"  $\updownarrow$ ; 5.00"  $\leftrightarrow$ ; .0042" thick,  
white linen finish, None

Q-8:- 7.99"  $\updownarrow$ ; 5.00"  $\leftrightarrow$ ; .0040" thick;  
white linen finish, None

Q-9:- 5.32"  $\leftrightarrow$ ; 3.42"  $\updownarrow$ ; .0044" thick  
white linen finish, None  
wt. 3.2713

Enclosure Retained

9-3178-3

November 23, 1937.

RECORDED 9-3178-4

Special Agent in Charge,  
Cleveland, Ohio.

Re: [REDACTED] b7C  
Clark Cable - Victim;  
Extortion.

Dear Sir:

There is transmitted herewith the laboratory report covering the examination of specimens submitted by your office in connection with the above entitled matter and received in the Bureau November 19, 1937.

Very truly yours,

J. E. Hoover  
John Edgar Hoover,  
Director.

RECEIVED  
NOV 23 1937  
U. S. DEPT. OF JUSTICE  
FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION  
WASHINGTON, D. C.

Watt  
LW 11

LABORATORY REPORT  
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

7-74-73

57C Laboratory Report  
November 22, 1957

Number: 9-3178-4

Case: [redacted]  
Clark Gable - Victim; Extortion.

Specimens: see attached page

Examination requested by: Cleveland  
Date received: 11/17/57  
Examination requested: Document - Fingerprint  
Result of examination: Examination by [redacted]

The handwriting on the submitted letter and envelope analyzed by Laboratory 9-3178-5 J through J was compared with the script section of the anonymous letter file maintained in the Bureau, without effecting an identification.

The letter is handwritten with pencil on eight sheets of paper all of which measure approximately 8 1/2", have a white liner finish and contain no watermarks.

The envelope measures approximately 8 1/2" x 1 1/8", has a white liner finish and contains no watermark.

A report on the fingerprint examination will be submitted separately.

Photographic copies of the submitted evidence are forwarded herewith.

THE ORIGINAL EVIDENCE IS BEING RETAINED IN THE LABORATORY FOR USE IN ANY SUBSEQUENT IDENTIFICATION WHICH MAY BE DESIRED. SHOULD YOUR OFFICE DESIRE THIS ORIGINAL EVIDENCE FOR USE IN ANY SUBSEQUENT PROCEEDINGS WHICH MAY DEVELOP THE BUREAU SHOULD BE NOTIFIED IN ADEQUATE TIME TO PERMIT TRANSMITTAL.

RECORDED

2 - Cleveland

1 - Los Angeles

1 - Laboratory

Report 7.9.47.  
M. 197.

2. One sheet written in pencil and reads "I suppose you...".
3. One sheet written in pencil and reads "technique. I am...".
4. One sheet written in pencil and reads "For me. Find...".
5. One sheet written in pencil and reads "could be do...".
6. One sheet written in pencil and reads "you as a...".
7. One sheet written in pencil and reads "you but want...".
8. One sheet written in pencil and reads "your career. nothing...".
9. One sheet written in pencil and reads "you know the...".
10. One envelope postmarked "Barberton, Ohio, October 20, 1937, 4:30 P. M."



November 27, 1937.

RECEIVED

9-275

Special Agent in Charge,  
Cleveland, Ohio.

RE: [REDACTED] b7C  
CLARE CARLE - VICTIM.  
MURDER.

Dear Sir:

Reference is made to your letter of November 15, 1937, transmitting an original extortion letter and accompanying envelope postmarked "Berkshire, Ohio, Oct. 20, 1937, 4:30 P.M.", in connection with the above-entitled case.

You are advised that this material has been examined in the Bureau's Laboratory and one latent fingerprint of value for comparison has been developed on the page containing "you bet what...".

Reference is also made to the Los Angeles Field Division's letter of November 11, 1937, in connection with the above-entitled case, Los Angeles File Number 9-277, transmitting the fingerprints of Violet Gentry and June Hunt for identification purposes and requesting that the fingerprints of Edgar Barrett and L. E. Friedman, whose prints are on file in the civil identification file, be compared with the latent developed in this case for the purpose of identification. The latent impression has been compared with the fingerprints of these individuals with negative results.

The fingerprints of Violet Gentry and June Hunt, together with the fingerprints of the following listed individuals, Los Angeles File Number 9-277, have been placed in the Bureau's civil identification file. 9-3178-5

RECORDED & INDEXED

NOV 27 1937 P.M.

ENCLOSURE

NOV 27 1937

Very truly yours,

John Edgar Hoover,  
Director.

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION  
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

1 1963

Laboratory Report

67C

Number: 9-3178-5

Case: ██████████  
CLARK GABLE, BROTHER;  
REPORTING.

Specimens:

- 9-3178-5 2 1 One sheet written/pencil and reads: "I suppose you--"  
" 2 One sheet written in pencil and reads: "technique. I am--"  
" 3 One sheet written in pencil and reads: "for me. Find--"  
" 4 One sheet written in pencil and reads: "could be do--"  
" 5 One sheet written in pencil and reads: "you as a --"  
" 6 One sheet written in pencil and reads: "you but want--"  
" 7 One sheet written in pencil and reads: "your career. Nothing--"

Examination requested by: Cleveland

Date received: (Enclosed and received 11-17-67 3:30 PM hr) (exp Nov. 17, 1967)

Examination requested: Document - Fingerprint

Result of examination:

- 9-3178-5 1 One sheet written in pencil and reads: "you know the--"  
" 2 One envelope postmarked Easton, Ohio, Oct. 20 4:00 PM.

Examination by: ██████████

cc-Los Angeles

67C

9-3178-5

Ans 11/17/67  
ALLS

# FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Form No. 1  
THIS CASE ORIGINATED AT **Los Angeles, California**

FILE NO **9-99**

REPORT MADE AT <b>CLEVELAND, OHIO</b>	DATE WHEN MADE <b>12/10/37</b>	PERIOD FOR WHICH MADE <b>11/15, 12/1/37</b>	REPORT MADE BY <b>[REDACTED] b7C</b>
TITLE <b>CLARK GABLE - VICTIM.</b>			CHARACTER OF CASE <b>REPUTATION</b>

**SYNOPSIS OF FACTS**

Rooming house proprietor states [REDACTED] lived at her house for approximately three months but left about three weeks ago. While living there, she was a constant source of trouble, in that she bothered roomers, appeared in the living room not sufficiently dressed, and came home intoxicated frequently. Has a bad reputation in town and is considered a "man chaser." Is the type who is jealous of anybody who is a success. [REDACTED] rooming house proprietor, compelled to discontinue [REDACTED] in view of her activities about the house. New file this office discloses [REDACTED] carried as victim in White Slave Traffic Act case and can be located at Williams, West Virginia. Lead included to interview her there.

- RUC -

**REFERENCE:**

Letter from the Los Angeles Office dated November 2, 1937.  
Bureau letter dated November 27, 1937.

COPIES OF THIS REPORT	<div style="font-size: 1.5em; font-weight: bold;">9-3178-6</div> <div style="font-size: 1.2em; font-weight: bold;">DEC 10 1937</div> <div style="font-size: 1.2em; font-weight: bold;">DEC 14 1937</div>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3 - Bureau</li> <li>3 - Los Angeles</li> <li>2 - Huntington (enc. 2)</li> <li>1 - WSA Cleveland</li> <li>1 - Cleveland</li> </ul>	

2-9-

DETAILS:

The letter of reference from the Los Angeles Office indicates that a letter was received by Mr. Clark Cable, postmarked at Barberton, Ohio, on October 20, 1937, bearing the signature of [REDACTED] who gave her address as [REDACTED] Barberton, Ohio.

b7c  
Upon receipt of the communication from the Los Angeles Office, an interview was had by Special Agent [REDACTED] of this office with Mr. Eberiah B. Freed, United States Attorney, and Mr. Frank Wiedemann, Assistant United States Attorney, Cleveland, Ohio. Mr. Freed examined the original extortion letter and declined prosecution on the ground that there was no violation as he was doubtful that anything of value was demanded. He stated that in all probability this letter was written by a "movie struck" girl, who probably thought this would be a good way to get into the movies. He stated, however, to Special Agent [REDACTED] that he desired that the writer of the letter be interviewed and if she was found to be a person of low mentality, she should be reprimanded and advised not to write such a letter in the future. If she was found to be an individual of sound mind and of the cool, calculating type, he suggested that the writer be again brought to his attention, in order that he might reconsider his decision regarding prosecution.

At [REDACTED] Barberton, Ohio, agent inquired as to [REDACTED] and was advised that she had left there about three weeks ago. The proprietor of the house, [REDACTED] advised that she did not know the present whereabouts of [REDACTED] but it was apparent that [REDACTED] would be in possession of information as to the background and history of this girl. It is noted that the husband of [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] appeared to be an intelligent and well bred woman and not the type who would approve of the letter directed to Mr. Clark Cable.

[REDACTED] stated that [REDACTED] had been living at 370 West Wooster Road for approximately three months and that her father lives in either West Virginia or Kentucky. It was the understanding of [REDACTED]

57

20

9-99

day [redacted] received a telegram from Steubenville, Ohio, in which [redacted] stated that she would be home at noon. However, she failed to arrive and it is [redacted] impression that she might possibly be hitchhiking to Hollywood. Through an aunt of [redacted], [redacted] Steubenville, Ohio, [redacted] learned that [redacted] had been there in company with a Jewish individual, named [redacted] proprietor of a cigar store in Akron, Ohio, whom she stated she intended marrying.

Since that time [redacted] has not heard anything concerning her.

The description of [redacted] as obtained from [redacted] is as follows:

Age	25 - 30
Height	5' 1"
Weight	120 lbs.
Eyes	Blue
Hair	Dark Brown
Build	Plump
Dress	Very sloppy

Since the dictation of this report, information has been received that [redacted] was practicing as a prostitute in Youngstown, Ohio, and that she had been brought there from Wellsburg, West Virginia, by [redacted], who has been mentioned in this report. Investigation conducted by Special Agent [redacted] in connection with the transportation of [redacted] by [redacted] is outlined in his report dated at Cleveland, Ohio, December 2, 1937, under the title, [redacted].

In the report of Special Agent [redacted] it is noted that there is a lead included for the Huntington Office to contact victim at the home of her father, [redacted]. A lead is included in this report for the Huntington Office to also discuss instant matter with [redacted] at the time she is interviewed regarding her transportation from West Virginia to Ohio.

Attention is directed to the opinion and suggestion of United States Attorney America E. Freed, Cleveland,

b7C

Ohio, in view of which it is requested that [REDACTED] be reprimanded concerning the letter she forwarded to Mr. Clark Cable.

A copy of the letter received at this office from the Los Angeles Office, dated November 2, 1937, together with photostatic copy of the original letter and envelope, is attached to this report for the assistance of the Huntington Office in conducting the desired interview.

**ENCLOSURES: TO HUNTINGTON OFFICE:**

Letter from the Los Angeles Office to the Cleveland Office, dated November 2, 1937.

Photostatic copy of extortion letter and envelope.

**UNDEVELOPED LEAD:**

b7C

The HUNTINGTON FIELD DIVISION at WILLSBURG, MISSISSIPPI, will contact [REDACTED] at the home of her father, [REDACTED], and interview her along the lines suggested by United States Attorney Emerich A. Freed, Cleveland, Ohio, who has declined any prosecution.

- REFERRED UPON COMPLETION TO THE OFFICE OF ORIGIN -

# FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

REPORT MADE AT **LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA**

FILE NO. **9-12**

REPORT MADE AT <b>WASHINGTON, D. C.</b>	DATE WHEN MADE <b>2-9-38</b>	PERIOD FOR WHICH MADE <b>2/2, 3/38</b>	REPORT MADE BY <b>[REDACTED]</b> <span style="float: right;">b7C</span>
TITLE <b>CLARA GABLE - VICTIM</b> <span style="float: right;">b7C</span>			CHARACTER OF CASE <b>KIDNAPING</b>

**SYNOPSIS OF FACTS**

b7C { **[REDACTED]** father of Subject, advised Subject living East Liverpool, Ohio with **[REDACTED]**, telephone **[REDACTED]**

- R U C -

REFERENCE: b7C Report of Special Agent **[REDACTED]**, dated 12-10-37 at Cleveland, Ohio.

DETAILS: **AT WELLSBURG, WEST VIRGINIA**

b7C { Agent interviewed **[REDACTED]** advised that Subject, his daughter, had left Wellsburg some two months ago and she was presently living in East Liverpool, Ohio. He stated that she was rooming with one **[REDACTED]** whose address there was unknown to him, however, he had learned that Subject could be reached at telephone number **[REDACTED]**. He further stated that his daughter had told him that she was working with a man in East Liverpool who was selling something for the American Legion or the Salvation Army.

**UNDEVELOPED LEADS:**

b7C THE CLEVELAND FIELD DIVISION at EAST LIVERPOOL, OHIO will locate and interview **[REDACTED]** along the lines set out in report of reference.

- RETURNED UPON COMPLETION TO THE OFFICE OF ORIGIN -

<p><b>COPIES OF THIS REPORT</b></p> <p>1 - Los Angeles</p> <p>1 - Cleveland</p> <p>1 - Washington</p>	<p>③</p> <p>2</p> <p>2</p> <p>2</p>	<p><b>9-3178-7</b></p> <p><b>FEB 11 1938</b></p>	<p><b>FEB 12 1938</b></p>
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# FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Form No. 1  
THIS CASE ORIGINATED AT **Los Angeles**

**Cleveland** FILE NO. **9-37**

REPORT MADE AT <b>Cleveland, Ohio</b>	DATE WHEN MADE <b>2/12/38</b>	PERIOD FOR WHICH MADE <b>2/15/38</b>	REPORT MADE BY <b>[REDACTED] JFD:HE</b>
TITLE <b>CLARK GABLE - Victim</b>			CHARACTER OF CASE <b>EXTORTION</b>

**SYNOPSIS OF FACTS:**

*b7C* [REDACTED] located and interviewed at Ceramic Hotel, East Liverpool, Ohio. Readily admits having sent letter to Clark Gable and advises she did not realize seriousness of sending such a letter through U. S. Mails, but was in desperate need of work at the time. Penalty for sending such letters through the mails pointed out to her. She advises only knowledge of past history of Clark Gable in her possession obtained through overhearing an unknown bus driver remark to another unknown person that he knew Gable prior to his stardom and that his past was not above reproach.

- RUC -

**REFERENCES:**

Report of Special Agent [REDACTED] at Cleveland, Ohio, dated 12/10/37. *b7C*  
Report of Special Agent [REDACTED], Huntington, West Virginia, dated 2/3/38.

**DETAILS:**

**AT EAST LIVERPOOL, OHIO**

The 1937 city directory recorded [REDACTED] as residing at 516 Jackson Street in East Liverpool, Ohio. At that address the writer interviewed both [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] who run a rooming house. They stated that subject [REDACTED] had left that address approximately ten days prior to the interview. *b7C*

APPROVED AND FORWARDED <i>[Signature]</i>	DATE <b>9-3/78-9</b>	FEB 28 1938
COPIES OF THIS REPORT 3 - Los Angeles 1 - W.A. Cleveland 2 - Cleveland		FEB 28 AM

and had left no forwarding address. However, [redacted] stated that subject was selling some kind of medicine [redacted] in connection with a campaign being put on by the Ladies Auxiliary of the Veterans of Foreign Wars in East Liverpool, Ohio. [redacted] telephoned [redacted] [redacted] East Liverpool, Ohio, which individual is President of the Ladies Auxiliary of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, and through her ascertained that subject was last known to be residing at the Ceramic Hotel in East Liverpool.

At the Ceramic Hotel, corner Fourth and Walnut Streets, the writer located and interviewed [redacted]. She readily admitted having sent instant letter to Clark Gable, and stated that at the time she sent the letter she was in desperate need of employment, and as evidence of this pointed out that she had shortly thereafter started to practice prostitution in Youngstown, Ohio. In this connection it has been previously pointed out that subject was located in a house of prostitution at Youngstown, in November of 1937 and the pimp who placed her there, [redacted], was a subject of a White Slave Traffic Act investigation conducted by the Cleveland field division.

[redacted] advised that she knew of nothing definite regarding Clark Gable's past history, but at one time overheard a bus driver talking to another unknown individual, wherein the bus driver indicated that he knew Clark Gable prior to the time that Mr. Gable became a film star, and knew that Clark Gable's past history was not above reproach. [redacted] stated that inasmuch as she knew how to fix dance she thought she could interest Mr. Gable in securing work for her in Hollywood. She stated that she had not written letters to any other prominent individuals and that this was the first occasion on which she had sent letters through the U. S. Mails or otherwise used any black-mail tactics. It was pointed out to her the seriousness of the offense of using the U. S. Mails in the manner in which she did in sending the letter to Clark Gable, and the penalty for this offense was pointed out to her. She appeared to be thoroughly alarmed at what she had done, and she stated that she would not do more in the future.

Inasmuch as the U. S. Attorney at Cleveland, at the inception of this investigation, suggested that should the writer of the letter be determined to be an individual of low morality, she should be reprimanded and advised not to write such a letter in the future, no further investigation is being conducted in the premises, the suggestion of the U. S. Attorney having been carried out.

- REFERRED UPON COMPLETION TO THE DIVISION OF ORIGIN -

**FILE DESCRIPTION**

**SUBJECT** Clark Gable

**FILE NO.** 9-3482

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION  
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE  
COMMUNICATIONS SECTION

FEB 21 1938

POSTAL

1  
**DECODED COPY**

111 COLLECT GOVT VIA MPT

BY LOS ANGELES CALIF 21

b7C

RECEIVED

FBI JUSTICE WASH DC

b7C [REDACTED] CLARK GABLE, VIKEY. MGM STUDIOS REFERRED THIS OFFICE  
TODAY LETTER RECEIVED BY VICTIM POSTMARKED FONDA, IOWA, FEBRUARY  
FIFTH SIGNED BY SUBJECT [REDACTED] ADDRESS, ROUTE ONE, AS FOLLOWS- QUOTE  
CLARK GABLE, IF YOU VALUE YOUR LIFE AND YOUR FUTURE THEN SEND ME  
ONE THOUSAND DOLLARS RIGHT AWAY AND TELL NO ONE OF ELSE. I AM  
DISGUISED BY WRITING BY PRINTING SO NOTHING CAN BE PROVIDED. MY  
DAD IS NAIL UP ON HIS FARM, AND I AM GOING TO GET MONEY IF I HAVE  
TO STEAL IT. SAY NOTHING TO NO ONE OF ELSE. ALICE SCHETTER, ROUTE  
ONE, FONDA, IOWA, UNQUOTE. AM FORWARDING PHOTOSTATIC COPIES

LETTER MEMPHIS OFFICE FOR HANDLING

RECORDED

INDEXED

3482-1  
FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION  
10507 FEB 26 1938 A.M.  
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

Federal Bureau of Investigation  
United States Department of Justice

903 Pacific Commerce Bldg.  
Los Angeles, California  
February 21, 1938

Director,  
Federal Bureau of Investigation  
Washington, D. C.

Re: [REDACTED] b7C  
CLARK GABLE - VICTIM  
EXTORTION

Dear Sir:

Reference is made to the telegram from the Los Angeles office to the Bureau dated February 21, 1938 with respect to the above entitled case.

On this date there was received in the Los Angeles office from the Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Studio in Culver City, California, a letter reading as follows:

"Clark Gable.

If you value your life and your future then send me one thousand dollars right away and tell no one or else! I am disguising my writing by printing. So nothing can be proved. My dad is hard up on his farm and I am going to get money if I have to steal it. Say nothing to no one or else!

Alice Schmetter  
Route One  
Fonda, Iowa."

There was also received with the above letter the envelope in which it had been mailed, which is postmarked Fonda, Iowa, February 9, 1938, 9:00 A.M. The envelope bears no return address and it was addressed to the victim at Hollywood, California.

The original of the above mentioned letter, as well as the envelope, is being forwarded to the Bureau in an appropriate envelope marked for the attention of the laboratory. This envelope is attached hereto as is a photostatic copy of the letter and envelope.

The photostatic copies of the letter and envelope are being forwarded to the Los Angeles office with its copies of this communication.

9-3482-2  
SEARCHED INDEXED  
SERIALIZED FILED  
FEB 22 1938  
FBI - LOS ANGELES

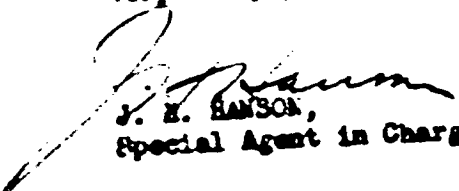
February 21, 1938

Director, F.B.I.  
Page Two.

The Des Moines office should conduct an appropriate investigation at Ponda, Iowa in an effort to identify the victim, handling investigation appropriately and if the victim is identified and prosecution results, the Los Angeles office should be notified immediately in order that the victim can be informed of the developments in this case.

It is requested that in the Laboratory the Bureau make an appropriate study in an effort to locate fingerprint impressions, also to make an analysis of the paper and envelope. The Des Moines office, as well as the Los Angeles office, should be advised of the results of this study and both of these offices should also be furnished with a photographic copy of the letter and envelope.

Very truly yours,

  
J. E. HANSON,  
Special Agent in Charge

JHE:MC  
Encl.  
cc: Des Moines

CLARK GABLE.

IF YOU VALUE YOUR LIFE AND YOUR  
FUTURE THEN SEND ME ONE THOUSAND  
DOLLARS RIGHT AWAY AND TELL NO  
ONE OR ELSE! I AM DISGUISED MY  
WRITING BY PRINTING. SO NOTHING  
CAN BE PROVED. MY DAD IS HARD UP  
ON HIS FARM AND I AM GOING TO  
GET MONEY IF I HAVE TO STEAL  
IT. SAY NOTHING TO NO ONE OR  
ELSE!

ALICE SCHWETTER  
ROUTE. ONE  
FOXDA. IOWA.

Director, F.B.I.  
Page Two.

ation at For  
vestigation  
tion results  
in order the  
case.

appropriate  
to make an  
as well as  
of this stu  
a photograph

JHM:MC  
Encl.  
cc: Los Mol

9-3482-7

LETTER THIS DATE RETURN TO



Clark Gable  
Hollywood  
California.



FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION  
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

8362

(Recorded 2-25-38 10: A.M.)

Laboratory Report

b7C

Case: ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ Check Cables - Victim's  
Mortimer

Number: 9-8362-2

Specimens:

- 9-8362-2 Q 1 One envelope postmarked at Pusan, Korea Feb 9, 1938 9 AM,  
addressed: "Check Cables, Hollywood, California."  
Q 2 One sheet which reads: "Check Cables if you value".

Examination requested by: Los Angeles, Calif.

Date received: Mailed and received 2/24/38. 2:30 PM (chp Feb. 24, 1938.)

Examination requested: ~~Document - Forgery~~

Examination by: ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~

Result of examination:

b7C

THE ABOVE IS SUBMITTED.

cc: Los Angeles

(Photographic copies of both envelope and letter to  
Los Angeles and Los Angeles)

Material examined in Laboratory 2-24-38  
No latent prints developed. ✓  
Examined by Lab.

RECEIVED  
DIRECTOR

**Federal Bureau of Investigation  
United States Department of Justice  
Washington, D. C.**

RECEIVED  
Time: 1:20 P.M.

February 23, 1936

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. LADD

b7C

Re:

CLARE MABLE - Victim;  
EXTORTION.

At this time I called SAC Chipman at Des Moines regarding the above extortion case. Mr. Chipman told me that to his knowledge no information had been received from the Los Angeles Office regarding this case. I then quoted to Mr. Chipman the wire that had been received in the Bureau on the 21st of February from the Los Angeles Office. I advised Mr. Chipman to get in touch with Los Angeles and to ascertain when the photostatic copies of the extortion letter were sent to Des Moines. I then told him to find out all he could about this [redacted] and to advise the Bureau of any developments. b7C

Respectfully,

b7C [redacted]

RECORDED

9-3482-13  
FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION  
FEB 23 1936 P.M.  
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

Federal Bureau of Investigation  
United States Department of Justice  
Washington, D. C.

EST:LR

February 24, 1935.

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. TOLSON

Time: 7:30 P. M.

I called SA [redacted] at Des Moines. He stated that he had talked to the United States Attorney, and if Taylor's conduct is of average mentality, he will authorize a complaint. I advised [redacted] that what we will probably do is issue a subpoena giving the details and stating that the facts will be presented to the US Attorney for his opinion regarding prosecution.

Taylor was picked up this afternoon at Fonda, Iowa, and taken to [redacted] for the investigation. [redacted] he did not see [redacted], who made the apprehension, and got the official information desired for the release, and he did not see it. [redacted] interviewed Alice [redacted] as well as [redacted]. She doesn't know anything about his letter [redacted].

[redacted] has been unable to reach SA [redacted] to inform him of the US Attorney's decision.

Respectfully,

[redacted signature block]

4-1111-4  
FEB 25 1935  
U.S. DEPT. OF JUSTICE

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION  
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

Transmit the following Teletype message to:

WFI WDC WASH 2:15 PM WDO

SAC LOS ANGELES

(decoded copy)

b7c [REDACTED] CLARK GABLE VICTIM EXTORTION. TELEPHONIC INQUIRY  
RECEIVED FROM BUREAU RELATIVE TO INVESTIGATION CONDUCTED THIS MATTER  
AT FORD, IOWA. BUREAU ADVISED YOU WERE FORWARDED NECESSARY DATA  
FOR INVESTIGATION. NO RECORD OF RECEIPT OF SAME IN THIS OFFICE.  
FBIAS ADVISED UNITED STATES HAVE BEEN FORWARDED AND IF NOT, THEN  
SAME MAY BE RETURNED.

CLIPPING

WDO

SC WASH

WASH

9-3482-

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION	
FEB 25 1936 P. M.	
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE	
FILE	

JOHN EDGAR HOOVER  
DIRECTOR

Federal Bureau of Investigation  
United States Department of Justice  
Washington, D. C.

February 24, 1935.

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. TAMM

SA [redacted] called from Des Moines re [redacted] Gaylord Forsyth. He stated that SA [redacted] had gotten a signed statement from Forsyth, and that it is his opinion that Forsyth has been reading too many detective stories. He stated that Forsyth has an eighth grade education, and lives with his mother, who is rather sick, at the corner of [redacted] Iowa. He works on various farms as a laborer, but is not a farmer by profession. He has been in 100 camps. For the past couple of years he has come to Florida for the winter, and worked in a restaurant in Orlando, Florida.

The girl in this case, whose married name is [redacted] is twenty years of age, a [redacted] and lives with her father, [redacted] IS about 150 miles northwest of Des Moines. [redacted] is normal except about this girl. He had no intention of obtaining the money, merely to scare her. b7C

On January 24, 1935, the girl received a letter from Eagle Grove, Iowa, from a man who said he was a truck driver, and who had received a letter with the girl's name and that of Gaylord Forsyth written on it, and that he wanted to get acquainted with her. Apparently the man Forsyth writes her now quite often and on anything handy, but does not do it maliciously, but only because he thinks of her.

The Deputy Sheriff who aided SA [redacted] in locating the farm is E. A. Hilerist, of Pocahontas, Iowa.

[redacted] stated that there is no chance of a lead of information out there, and was instructed not to make a release until so instructed by the Bureau. I told him that the Bureau would notify Los Angeles of this matter.

Respectfully,

L. C. Vogel.

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION  
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE  
COMMUNICATIONS SECTION

FEB 23 1938

POSTAL

WIS 34 TONI COLLECT

6 DESMOINES IOWA 25 337P

DIRECTOR

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION U.S. DEPT. OF JUSTICE WASH. DC

~~REDACTED~~ CLARK GABLE VICTIM EXTORTION PROSECUTION

AUTHORIZED BY E. G. DUNN USA MASON CITY COMPLAINT FILED AND WARRANT  
ISSUED USC FORT DODGE THIS DATE BOND WILL BE SET TWO  
THOUSAND DOLLARS HEARING LATE TODAY

L. M. CHIPMAN.

RECORDED

9-3482-6

FILED

MAR 2 1938

U. S. DEPT. OF JUSTICE

STANDARD FORM NO. 64A  
APPROVED BY THE PRESIDENT  
MARCH 18, 1959

# TELEGRAM

OFFICIAL BUSINESS—GOVERNMENT RATES  
Orig FBI Los Angeles

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE  
FBI LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA  
FEBRUARY 28 1938  
8 PM  
VIA WESTERN UNION

L M CHIPMAN  
FBI  
739 INSURANCE EXCHANGE BUILDING  
DES MOINES IOWA

b7C <sup>0</sup> ~~REDACTED~~ CLARK GABLE, VIKKI. INFORMATION FURNISHED YOUR OFFICE BY  
LETTER DATED FEBRUARY TWENTY FIRST IN SUBSTANCE AS FOLLOWS. LETTER RECEIVED  
BY VICTIM POSTMARKED FONDA, IOWA, FEBRUARY NINTH SIGNED BY SUBJECT GIVING  
ADDRESS, ROUTE ONE AS FOLLOWS: QUOTE CLARK GABLE, IF YOU VALUE YOUR LIFE  
AND YOUR FUTURE THEN SEND ME ONE THOUSAND DOLLARS RIGHT AWAY AND TELL NO  
ONE OR ELSE! I AM DISGUISED MY WRITING BY PRINTING SO NOTHING CAN BE  
PROVED. MY CAR IS HAND UP ON HIS PARK, AND ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ I AM GOING TO GET  
MONEY IF I HAVE TO STEAL IT. SAY NOTHING TO NO ONE OR ELSE! ALICE SCHWETTER.  
ROUTE ONE, FONDA, IOWA. UNQUOTE. PHOTOSTATIC COPIES FORWARDED AMSD.

HANSON

9-3482-	
FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION	
MAR 2 1938 A.M.	
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE	
FILE	FILE

MAILED

February, 25, 1938.

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. ROBERT E. GATES,  
DIRECTOR OF INFORMATION.

I am transmitting herewith copies of a suggested press release with reference to the apprehension of Gaylord Perryth at Funda, Iowa.

Very truly yours,

John Edgar Hoover,  
Director.

Enclosures.

RECORDED  
&  
INDEXED

7-3482-7

MAR 1 1938 A.D.

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

1 ENCL

9 2 9 10 11

sent as to the Bureau  
2-24-38

GAT



February 20, 1936

MEMORANDUM

Clark Gable, the motion picture actor, received an extortion letter through the United States mails at Hollywood, California, in which a demand was made for the sum of \$1,000. The letter, postmarked Ponda, Iowa, February 9, 1936, was signed Alice Schnetter and contained the statement "If you value your life and your future then send me \$1,000 right away and tell me one or else." The writer of this letter indicated that her father was hard up on his farm and that she was going to get money if she had to steal it. Mr. Gable was warned not to say anything concerning this matter and was instructed to send the money to the writer of the letter at Route 1, Ponda, Iowa.

This extortion letter was referred to the Federal Bureau of Investigation, United States Department of Justice, at Los Angeles, California, and thereafter Special Agents of the Des Moines, Iowa Office of the Federal Bureau of Investigation were assigned to initiate an investigation in the vicinity of Ponda, Iowa.

Through investigation it was determined that one Gaylord Percyth was a logical suspect and on the afternoon of February 24, 1936, a Special Agent of the Federal Bureau of Investigation located Percyth at Ponda, Iowa. Upon interrogation he confessed to writing the extortion letter to Clark Gable, signing the name of Alice Schnetter, Route No. 1, Ponda, Iowa, whom he has known for the past several years. Percyth would not admit that he had additional plans for obtaining the money from Clark Gable in the event it was mailed to Alice Schnetter, but stated that Alice Schnetter did not have any knowledge concerning the extortion plot and that he signed her name to the letter as a spite proposition as he had a grudge against her. He also stated that Alice Schnetter had nothing to do with this extortion plot, and investigation disclosed that she is reportedly and comes from a well to do family. She likewise stated, upon interview, that she knew nothing whatsoever about the extortion letter directed to Clark Gable.

Gaylord Percyth is thirty years of age, single, a resident of Ponda, Iowa, and has been employed as a farm laborer in the vicinity of Ponda. He is presently being held in the County Jail at Pechonota, Iowa.

The facts as to this extortion plot will be immediately presented to the United States Attorney at Mason City, Iowa, for his opinion as to prosecution of Gaylord Percyth.

9-3482-7

Federal Bureau of Investigation  
United States Department of Justice  
Washington, D. C.

RM:VTL  
6:00 P. M.

Date February 24, 1938

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. TAMM

b7C { Special Agent [redacted] telephoned from Des Moines, advising that one Gaylord Forsyth had been taken into custody by Special Agent [redacted] at Fonda, Iowa this afternoon and that he had just admitted writing the extortion letter to Clark Cable, and at the time of this telephone call Agent [redacted] was attempting to get a signed confession from him.

He stated that Alice Schmetter was found to be reputable, of well to do people, and was thereafter interviewed at her home on Route #1, Fonda, Iowa. Alice Schmetter stated that she did not write the extortion letter in question, but named Gaylord Forsyth as a suspect, stating that he had written her name on several \$1 bills, one of which came into possession of a truck driver who later introduced himself and asked for an engagement. On one of the bills was found the initials "C.F." She further stated that she had several dates with Forsyth in the past, but her father had forbidden her to see him, and on one occasion ordered Forsyth from the premises. Thereafter, she refused to have any further dates with Forsyth, and for this reason believed he may have written the letter, signing her name thereto.

b7C { In subsequently furnishing additional information concerning the subject in this case, Agent [redacted] advised that Forsyth is 30 years of age, single, a resident of Fonda, Iowa, and that he has been employed as a farm laborer in the vicinity of Fonda, Iowa. He stated further that a Deputy Sheriff from Pocahontas, Iowa had accompanied Agent [redacted] to the place where Forsyth resides and thereafter Forsyth was taken to the County Jail at Pocahontas, Iowa for questioning. Forsyth admitted

INDEXED

INDEXED

Signature

9-3482-8

writing the letter to the victim, but stated he had no intention of extorting money from him, but wrote the letter, signing the name Alice Schmetter, as a spite proposition because Alice Schmetter would not have anything further to do with him. He further stated that Alice Schmetter was not involved in this plot and that she knew nothing whatsoever concerning the letter to Clark Gable.

b7C [redacted] further advised that he called the United States Attorney at Mason City, Iowa to determine whether he would authorize prosecution against Gaylord Forsyth. The United States Attorney has looked into the Extortion Statute, advising that he would prosecute if Forsyth is mentally sound.

At 9:25 P. M., I telephoned Mr. Hanson at Los Angeles giving him the facts concerning the apprehension of Gaylord Forsyth. Mr. Hanson advised that he would notify either Clark Gable, or an official at the studio and would make a release to the press immediately.


b7C At 9:45 P. M., I telephoned Agent [redacted] at Des Moines authorizing him to make a release in this case, advising him also that the facts concerning the apprehension of Forsyth had been furnished the Los Angeles Office, and a release would likewise be made at Los Angeles.

[redacted]

b7C

## Farmhand Admits Threat to Gable

(U.S.) The "Alice" who threatened Clark Gable, the actor, if he failed to give "her" \$1,000 turned out to be Gaylord Perrythe, 28, a Ponda (Iowa) farm hand, the Federal Bureau of Investigation reported today. The bureau said Perrythe admitted writing the threatening letter to Gable and signing it "Alice Schmeiter"—the name of a prominent Iowa family.

*Conf*  
  
b7c

9-3482-H  
WASH. TIMES  
FEB 23 1936

# Extortion Note Sent Gable to Spite Girl

By United Press

FONDA, Iowa, Feb. 25—A husky, unemployed farm worker admitted to Federal agents today that he sent a \$1000 extortion note to Clark Gable to "spite" a pretty young widow who spurned his love.

Gaylor Forsyth, 30, mailed the note to Gable two weeks ago, signing the name of Mrs. Alice Schnetter, 30, member of a respected Iowa family. He said he had no plans for doing anything more than sending the letter.

"I did it for spite," he said. "I fell in love with her, but she wouldn't pay any attention to me. Her father wouldn't let me near his place."

G-men yesterday arrested Forsyth. He was traced thru his handwriting. Mrs. Schnetter knew nothing about the letter.

Forsyth's only concern was the effect his arrest would have on his mother and her neighbors.

"Gee," he said, "what will they think?"



CLARK GABLE

WASH. NEWS

FEB 25 1933

## FARMHAND IS HELD IN EXTORTION PLOT

Iowan Is Accused of Sending Letter to Clark Gable Demanding \$1,000

By the Associated Press

POCAHONTAS, Iowa, Feb. 25 — Gaylord Fawcett, 30-year-old farmhand, seized by Federal agents investigating a \$1,000 extortion letter sent to Clark Gable was held in yesterday morning action by the United States district attorney.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation announced the Fawcett, Iowa, man wrote a note telling the motion picture actor to pay \$1,000 "if you value your life or your future."

The name of Mrs. Alice Schaeffer, a widow, living with her parents near Ponda, was signed. Both Fawcett and Mrs. Schaeffer said the letter knew nothing about the actor.

Fawcett, the bureau said, told Mrs. Schaeffer's name out of spite because she had ignored his attentions. There were no indications as to what plans may have been made for obtaining the money from Mrs. Schaeffer in the event Gable had met the demand.

Fawcett was seized late yesterday at the home of his mother.

b7C

9-346-10

WASH. STAR

FEB 25 1936

45

# FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Form No. 1  
THIS CASE ORIGINATED AT **LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA**

FILE NO. **67C**

REPORT MADE AT

**ELLS WOLFE, IOWA**

DATE WHEN MADE

**2-26-38**

PERIOD FOR WHICH MADE

**2-22, 25-38**

REPORT MADE BY

CHARACTER OF CASE

**EXTORTION**

TITLE

**CHARGES**

**RAYLORD FORSYTH;**

**CLARK GABLE - VICTIM.**

## SYNOPSIS OF FACTS

Gaylord Forsyth, 30 year old farm laborer, Fonda, Iowa, in signed statement admits mailing on February 9, 1938 from Fonda, Iowa, to Hollywood, California, a threatening letter demanding of Victim Clark Gable, the addressee, \$1,000.00, and failure to do so would result in peril to his life and future. Letter hand printed with hard lead pencil on ordinary tablet paper and signed Alice Schnetter, Fonda, Iowa, who in 1936 and 1937 was the unwilling subject of Forsyth's affections. Forsyth, in 1936 and later, wrote Alice Schnetter's name and address on paper currency, several of which came into hands of other persons one of whom wrote Alice Schnetter, furnishing serial number of bill and fact bill also carried initials "O.P.". Gaylord Forsyth arrested 2-24-38 by Bureau Agent, submitted signed statement admitting guilt and identifying photographic copies of extortion letter. Prosecution authorized same date, and on 2-25-38 complaint sworn to before U. S. Commissioner, Ft. Dodge, Iowa, and warrant issued charging Forsyth with violation of Section 338-A, Title 18, USOC. Bond to be fixed at \$2,000.00 at preliminary hearing same date. Fingerprints of Subject forwarded to Technical Laboratory. Description of Subject contained herein.

- P -

*Mr. Chipman*

COPIES OF THIS REPORT

(AIRMAIL)

plus (AIRMAIL)

in City

W.C.

*W.C. 3/8*

**9-3482-9**

**MAR-24-38**

*ONE FOR MR. J.*

REFERENCE:

Copy of letter from the Los Angeles Office to the Bureau, dated 2-21-38. Telegram from the Los Angeles Office to the Des Moines Office, dated 2-23-38.

DETAILS:

b7C The title of this case is being CHANGED to show the Subject as GAYLOD FORSYTH, and the name [REDACTED] is being eliminated from the title entirely as it is not considered a proper alias.

Prior to the receipt of the reference letter there was a telephonic inquiry from the Bureau regarding this matter, and there being no file in the Des Moines Field Office an exchange of telegrams ensued and the receipt of the telegram of reference from the Los Angeles Field Office advised that the substance of the extortion letter involved herein and the fact that photostatic copies of same had been forwarded to this office along with the letter of reference. Upon receipt of the photostatic copy of the letter and envelope containing same, Agent proceeded immediately to Fonda, Iowa, where the following investigation was conducted.

b7C Inquiry at the Post Office resulted in information that the alleged signer of the extortion letter, Alice Schnetter, was unknown at that office. Inquiry among the clerks by [REDACTED] Postmistress, resulted in information that a young man named Schnetter had married a girl who resided near Varina, Iowa, some miles distant from Fonda. Further inquiry established that [REDACTED] Cashier of the Fonda National Bank, had sometime during his lifetime resided in the vicinity of Varina.

b7C [REDACTED] on interview advised that a young widow named [REDACTED] resided in [REDACTED] North and one mile West of Fonda with her parents, [REDACTED] prosperous farmers. [REDACTED] stated that he knew the young lady and stated that she was about 20 years of age and had when 17 years of age married a young man named [REDACTED] who a few weeks after their marriage had died, and since that time the young girl has lived at home with her parents. He stated that [REDACTED] was a prosperous farmer of excellent reputation who had had a comfortable income for many years past, even though farming conditions in the particular community were not of the best. He stated that it would be inconceivable that [REDACTED] would be prompted to write a letter demanding money as he distinctly recalled that upon the death of her husband she inherited a few thousand dollars, and furthermore because of the financial condition of her parents there would be nothing transpire that would encourage her to write a letter demanding money.



He was questioned if there had been any series of hay stack burnings and the like, indicating a group of persons in the community inclined to write threatening letters and do other underhanded acts of thievery or destruction, and he advised that while it was true that Fonda had a bad element of young men in it, so far they have committed no depredation on the surrounding countryside, and nothing of any unusual significance had happened.

b7C

Agent proceeded to the farm house of [redacted] and interviewed their daughter, Alice Schnetter, and her mother. They were not told at the onset of the interview the nature of the business that had brought Agent to their home, and were questioned generally regarding letter writing and anonymous communications and other matters of a like nature. Shortly after the questioning opened, Alice Schnetter said she understood the reason for Agent's visit and said she was very worried and annoyed about receiving letters from unknown persons, and further questioning developed that she had received possibly three letters, one of which she had retained and which was exhibited to Agent which letter was signed - "An Unknown Friend, Willard C. Christopher, Dakota City, Iowa, N.W. Territory". The envelope containing this letter bore a cancellation mark Eagle Grove, Iowa, 1:00 P.M., January 24, 1938. The letter is written in lead pencil in better than average handwriting. It consisted of three pages on ordinary tablet size paper and was apparently written from Dakota City, Iowa, on January 22, 1938. It is addressed - "Dear Unknown Friend", following the preliminary opening the letter stated that undoubtedly she would be surprised to hear from him, and the fact that he was a young man and the owner of a new V-8 truck and engaged in the business of general trucking and goes on to state that the writer had been in Sioux City, Iowa, the previous week and when he paid for his dinner that he ate there he tendered a \$5.00 bill and in return got four \$1.00 bills and some change, and the following is an exact quotation as the letter continues:

"As I was putting the bills in my billfold I noticed a name written across the back of one of the bills, and it was your name and address. So I thought you might be interested to know where the dollar bill [redacted] was. Now I will describe the bill to you as was a 1936 [redacted] bill No. [redacted] with the initials C.F. on the [redacted]

The letter goes on with a statement that the writer would appreciate hearing from the addressee and that when he is next in [redacted] he would like to meet her. This letter is being made a part of the Des Moines Field Office file.

Alice Schnetter stated that she had received other such communications, but this was the only one that had furnished her with any information regarding the written matter on the particular calling bill other than that her name and address were on it. She advised that she knew none of these men who had written to her and was very annoyed at the idea of anyone writing to her under such circumstances. She was then questioned as to the possible identity of the person signing the initials G. F., and she stated that sometime after the death of her husband she met a young man named Gaylord Forsyth at a neighborhood community gathering who had taken her home. That at his request she had gone out with him on one occasion, but had found him not at all pleasing to her taste and had indicated, in what she considered an unmistakable manner, that she wished to see him no more. That nevertheless this man Forsyth had attempted to force his attentions upon her and on several occasions had driven by her father's home, blowing the horn on his automobile and making several such trips by the house the same evening. That her father became very provoked at the annoying attentions of the man, and on one occasion when Forsyth had driven into the farm yard the father had taken a shotgun and chased Forsyth from the premises. On this particular occasion Forsyth had, prior to driving into the farm yard, parked outside the premises on the intersection of two county roads, and had shouted in a loud voice for her to come out so he wanted to talk to her. The day following this incident, [redacted] her father, discovered that the mailbox at the corner had been stolen. This mailbox had been at that particular location for 25 years, and all members of the [redacted] family are of the belief that Forsyth took the mailbox.

She stated that she had observed Forsyth while she was out with him, and thought him to be an exceedingly peculiar person of a nervous temperament, talked about various things in an extreme manner and seemed to be very eccentric. She furnished Agent with a description of Forsyth, which is not being repeated here as a more detailed description follows at the close of this report. She advised that Forsyth on one occasion was in Florida at about Christmas time and she received a Christmas card from him, written in what she presumed to be his handwriting. This Christmas card and the envelope containing it were given to Agent, and it is observed that the postcard is cancelled from the [redacted] Florida Post Office at 9:00 P.M., [redacted] 1934. The address is written in lead pencil, and one [redacted] is this [redacted] as Miss Alice Schnetter. [redacted] that from her first meeting [redacted] as calling her Mrs. rather than Mrs., which she [redacted] the postcard is an earnest affair [redacted] the country, has a simple verse wishing happiness [redacted] the New Year and in lead pencil has the following -

"To Alice from Gaylord". The two proper names are written in hand, whereas the words "to" and "from" are printed. This Christmas envelope are also being made a part of the Les Moines Field office file.

A comparison of the handwriting appearing on the envelope containing the Christmas card, and the handwriting appearing on the envelope addressed to the Victim in this case indicated to Agent some similarity. Likewise, the printing of the words "to" and "from", particularly the letters "T" and "R", bear decided similarity to the same letters in the threatening letter.

Concerning Alice Schmetter, it is set out here that she is 20 years of age, a widow, residing on a farm with her parents. She was direct and evidently truthful in all of her disclosures, has a nice honest appearance, and appeared to be a person of fine reputation and character. In view of the information she had given Agent at the time of this interview it is felt that it was more expedient to locate and determine Forsyth's connection with this matter than to prolong this interview by the securing of fingerprints, handwriting specimens, etc. Consequently, in view of later developments this was never done.

b7C Agent returned to Fonda, Iowa, the last known general address Alice Schmetter had of Gaylord Forsyth, and contacted [redacted] at the Fonda National Bank, and he stated that he knew [redacted] knew him to be a sort of a shiftless fellow of about 30 years of age about 1800, who while in town resided with his aunt, [redacted] a widow residing on the outskirts of the village. He advised that two weeks ago [redacted] came into the bank and stated that creditors were pursuing him and that he wanted to transfer his Model A Ford Coupe to his mother, which was done by one of the bank employees, and that on February 23, 1938 he re-appeared at the bank and stated he was no longer bothered by his creditors, which it developed were relatives of [redacted] from whom he had borrowed money, and that consequently he wanted the car re-conveyed to his name, which was done. A description of [redacted] was obtained from [redacted] but for reasons previously set out same is not furnished here. [redacted] advised that [redacted] could usually be found hanging about disreputable pool rooms and gambling places in town, and suggested that before a visit be made to his aunt's house, effort be made to locate him in one of the pool rooms. Agent having enlisted the assistance of [redacted] Deputy Sheriff, and known to be a reliable and trustworthy officer, made a tour of the pool rooms in an effort to locate [redacted] It is noted here that it would be practically useless for a stranger to make any inquiry in this village regarding an inhabitant, because of the distrust of the townspeople toward law enforcement. A tour of the

b7C [redacted] failed to result in the location of [redacted] and Agent and [redacted] then went to the residence of his aunt where he frequently stops. Forsyth was located at this place, and after a brief questioning at the residence, at which time he assumed a non-committal attitude, Agent deemed advisable to take him to some other place for interview, the nearest being the County Seat at Pocahontas, Iowa. Enroute to Pocahontas he was questioned regarding his recent activities in letter writing and he stated that the only letters he had written recently were letters to members of his family in a dispute over money. He was led to believe that this was the purpose of the interview and he was also questioned additionally regarding mailboxes missing in the community, regarding which he denied any knowledge. Upon arriving at a private room in the Court House, he was questioned regarding a certain communication which was of a serious nature, and it became apparent that Forsyth was becoming very uneasy. Without mentioning the threatening letter involved herein he was questioned at considerable length regarding his letter writing tendencies, leading up to the question of mutilating currency by writing people's name thereon and he stated that he did not know at the time he wrote on various dollar bills that it was against the law and he was truly sorry he had violated the law. He stated that he acquired the habit of writing names on dollar bills two or three years ago, first writing his own name and later the names of other people. He did not disclose, however, the name of Alice Schnetter as one of the persons whose name he had used for writing on dollar bills. He was then questioned about his initials G. F. appearing on one of the bills located and he acknowledged that that was possible. He was then requested to submit specimens of his handwriting and also specimens of hand printing and he became visibly nervous, and attempted very poorly to disguise his handwriting and printing. He was permitted to print a few words and then questioned and then requested to print a few more words, finally forgetting himself and making characters very similar with the characters in the threatening letter. Similarly he was confronted with the threatening letter and he acknowledged that he had written same. He was then asked to identify the photostatic copies of the envelope and hand printed letter and if said photostatic copies were reproductions of the letter he had sent to Clark Gable, the Victim in this case, he should initial same, which he did. The photostatic copies of the threatening letter and the envelope containing same, bearing the initials of G. F., are being retained in the Des Moines Field Office file.

Forsyth then furnished the following sworn signed statement the original of which is being retained in the Des Moines Field Office file:

Pocahontas, Iowa  
Feb. 24, 1938.

b7C "I, Gaylord Forsyth, do make the following statement to [redacted], Special Agent of the Federal Bureau of Investigation of my own free will, without duress or any promise of reward.

On February 8th, 1936, at Fonda, Iowa, I wrote a letter addressed to Clark Gable, the actor, in which letter I demanded \$1000.00 in cash from him. In this letter I threatened his life and future if he failed to comply with my request. I signed this letter Alice Schnetter, Route One, Fonda, Iowa. All of this letter was in hand-printing with a sharp, hard pencil. I purchased the tablet of paper at the Variety Store in Fonda, Iowa and I also purchased the envelope there. I attempted to avoid being caught at this by hand printing the letter. However, I forgot and used ordinary handwriting on the envelope. The envelope was addressed to Clark Gable, Hollywood, California.

I put this envelope in the United States Mails at Fonda, Iowa by dropping it in the letter slot at the United States Post Office at Fonda, Iowa. This was done on Feb. 9, 1936. No one knew I was doing this and I have told no one about it until now.

b7C Agent [redacted] has shown me a photographic copy of the letter and the envelope and I have placed my initials on each. I hereby acknowledge that these are photographs of the letter I mailed and that I sent to Clark Gable.

Sometime in 1936 I began the habit of putting my initials on paper money. I also at this time and later wrote the name of Alice Schnetter, and her address on these bills. I don't know for sure why I did this. I did not think it was a wrong thing to do. I understand that as a result of this she received some mail from strangers that had got these bills.

I was in love with this girl, Alice Schnetter and thought for a time that she was fond of me but later she did not want to see me any more. This made me feel very bad and the only reason I can offer for my actions in mailing the letter to Clark Gable is that I wanted her to be bothered by the authorities, but I did not want her to be harmed.

I have read the above statement and it is true and willingly given. I make this statement because I want to clear this whole matter up and I want to tell the truth about everything.

/s/ CATLOED FORESTER

Subscribed and sworn to in my presence.

/s/ G. E. O'Leary

b7C

b7C It will be noted that Foreyth stated he had purchased a tablet of paper at the Variety Store in Fonda, and had also purchased the envelope there. He does not know where the tablet and envelopes are at the present time, but believes it is possible that same may be at the residence of his aunt, [REDACTED]. He states that the only reason he can offer for writing the threatening letter to the victim in this case and demanding the \$1,000.00 is that after he had been repulsed by Alice Schnetter, his feelings had been so hurt that he felt that he ought to do something to get even with her. He states, however, that that is not the reason he started writing her name on dollar bills, but continued to do so thinking she might be annoyed by persons writing to her. He stated he had contemplated that she would be troubled by law enforcement officers as a result of the letter to Clark Gable, but it had never occurred to him that she might become involved in serious trouble. He was questioned at some length as to what he intended to do following the mailing of the first letter, insofar as arranging for a pay-off place for the \$1,000.00 and he stated he had never made up his mind, and now after his arrest believes he would never have done anything further. He further stated that he obtained the idea for writing the extortion letter from reading detective story magazines, which he does considerably.

b7C Agent notified the Des Moines Field Office immediately upon it becoming evident that Foreyth had written the letter in question, and notified the office further when a signed statement had been secured. Acting Special Agent in Charge Gene H. Henry notified [REDACTED] of the Bureau of the developments, and in addition communicated with United States Attorney E. G. Dunn at Mason City, Iowa, who authorized prosecutive action against Foreyth in this matter. This information was communicated to Agent, who after placing Foreyth in the Pocahontas County Jail at Pocahontas, Iowa, proceeded to Fort Dodge, Iowa, and on 2-25-38 took the following action.

#### AT FORT DODGE, IOWA.

E. H. Pratt, United States Commissioner, 1317 - 8th Avenue, North, was informed of Mr. Dunn's authorized prosecution, and Agent gave to a complaint charging Gaylord Foreyth with violation of Section 1344, Title 18, U.S.C., in substance in that on February 9, 1938, at Fonda, Iowa, Foreyth did knowingly and willingly deposit in the United States Mail for mailing, a certain threatening letter addressed to Clark Gable, Hollywood, California, in which letter the sum of \$1,000.00 was demanded.

A copy of this complaint is being made a part of the [REDACTED] Field Office file.

Warrant was issued based on the above complaint and placed in the hands of the Deputy United States Marshal for [REDACTED] and Agent was informed by United States Commissioner Pratt that same would

be set at \$2,000.00 later on the same date, upon the appearance of Forsyth before him. In the event Forsyth waives hearing and is bound over to the federal grand jury, or if such action is taken after final hearing, it is the practice in that division of the Northern District of Iowa to place prisoners in a jail at Rockwell City, Iowa.

The information concerning the filing of the complaint and issuing of warrant was communicated to the Bureau on 2-25-31 along with the statement that the anticipated bond would be \$2,000.00.

There are being retained in the Des Moines Field Office file two sets of paper bearing attempts at disguise of his handwriting by Forsyth, made during the course of the interview with him.

Transmitted to the Bureau by letter are two sets of fingerprints of Gaylord Forsyth with the request that same be compared to any latent fingerprints developed by the Technical Laboratory in connection with the examination of the original threatening letter and envelope.

b7C The criminal record of [REDACTED] is also being requested.

The following is a physical description of Gaylord Forsyth obtained from questioning and observation by Agent:

Name	GAYLORD FORSYTH
Age	30 years [REDACTED]
Height	5 ft. 11 in.
Weight	160 lbs.
Hair	Sandy - bald in front
Eyes	Blue
Complexion	Ruddy
Build	Slender
Teeth	Good, but front upper irregular
Speech	Slow and hesitant
Scars & Marks	Left ring finger broken first joint
Occupation	Laborer and dishwasher

b7C In connection with Forsyth's occupation, he advised that his wife, [REDACTED] has been a widow since Gaylord was 8 years of age and that he has since that time for the most part worked as a laborer for adjoining farmers. He stated that a few years ago he rented a farm and attempted to operate it as a business, but was a failure at it. He advised that he has an eighth grade education and never had any difficulty in school either as to scholastic ability or deportment; that for the last two winters he came to Florida and worked as a dishwasher in restaurants. He has a feeling that he has been the victim of circumstances, and informed Agent that

he had been "kicked around all his life". He stated that he has never been in any trouble whatever before; that he has never been arrested or even spoken to by an officer. He advised that a short time ago he became a member of a friendship society having an office in Miami, Florida, the name of which he has forgotten, which society is a matrimonial club and the reason he joined the society was that it was becoming lonesome for him and he wanted some girls to write to.

**UNDEVELOPED LEADS:**

THE DES MOINES FIELD OFFICE at Ponds, Iowa, will make investigation at the Variety Store to determine if Forsyth purchased the tablet and envelope used in the writing to the Victim in this case, and if so secure the name and address of the person who can identify Forsyth making the purchase.

Will also make arrangements to secure permission to either obtain voluntarily or to conduct a search for the remainder of the tablet used in the writing of the letter involved herein at the home of [REDACTED]

b7c

At Fort Dodge, Iowa, and Mason City, Iowa, will follow prosecutive action in this case.

- PENDING -



**Federal Bureau of Investigation**  
**United States Department of Justice**  
739 Insurance Exchange Building  
Des Moines, Iowa  
February 28, 1938

Director  
Federal Bureau of Investigation  
Washington, D. C.

Re: <sup>C</sup>GAYLORD FORSYTH;  
CLARK GABLE - VICTIM.  
EXTORTION.

Dear Sir:

Enclosed herewith are two fingerprint cards of Gaylord Forsyth arrested in connection with the mailing of an extortion letter to Clark Gable, Hollywood, California, on February 9, 1938, from Ponda, Iowa.

The original of the above mentioned letter, as well as the envelope, were forwarded to the Bureau, marked for the attention of the Technical Laboratory by the Los Angeles Field Office on February 21, 1938. It is requested that the fingerprint impressions appearing on the fingerprint cards submitted herewith, of Forsyth, be compared with such latent fingerprints as it was possible to develop on the original letter and envelope forwarded to the Laboratory by the Los Angeles Field Office, advising the Los Angeles and Des Moines Field Offices of the results of such examination.

Very truly yours,

*L. E. Chipman*  
L. E. CHIPMAN,  
Special Agent in Charge.

CCN/ag  
Encl.  
9-16

RECORDED

9-3482 10	
MAR 5 1938	
U.S. DEPT. OF JUSTICE	FILE

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION  
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

Date Received: 3-4-38

Single Fingerprint report

Case Re: RAYMOND FROST;  
CLARA MARLE - VICTIM.  
MURDER.

Number: 3-27-1

Specimen:

Submitted two sets of the fingerprints of Raymon Frost,  
suspect, to be compared with the latent developed in this  
case.

Examination requested by: Des Moines

Date received: chg Mar. 3, 1938.

Examination requested: Fingerprint

Result of examination:

Examination by: [redacted]

cc - L S Angeles

b7C

To this Section 3-4-38  
No latent fingerprints previously developed in this case  
Dictated 3-8-38

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION  
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

WGD:AKI

21347

March 2, 1936  
Laboratory Report

Case:

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ b7C  
Clark Gable - Victim;  
Extortion.

Number:

9-3482-3

Specimens:

- Q1, One envelope postmarked "Tomb, Tenn., February 9, 1936, 9 A. M.",  
addressed "Clark Gable, Hollywood, California".  
Q2, One sheet which reads: "Clark Gable if you value..."

Examination requested by: Los Angeles

Let: received: 2-24-36

Examination requested: Document - Fingerprint

Result of examination:

Examination by:

b7C

Specimen Q1 is a plain white envelope containing printing in the upper left-hand corner "After Five Days Return To Tomb" which are found two ruled lines for the insertion of a return address. The envelope is addressed in pencil in script writing. The envelope contains no watermark and measures approximately 3 3/4 by 4 1/2 inches.

Specimen Q2 is handprinted in pencil on a piece of white pad paper ruled with 25 blue green lines on the front starting approximately 2 inches from the top of the page and spaced an average distance of .367 inches apart. The reverse side of the paper contains 25 lines. The annotations at the top of the paper are such as will probably match with particles of paper still remaining in the pad, should the pad be found. The paper contains no watermark, measures approximately 5 by 8 inches and has a substance number of 24.

The material was treated for the development of latent fingerprints but none of value was found.

Photographic copies of the specimens submitted will be forwarded to the Los Angeles and San Antonio offices within the next several days.

RECORDED

9-3482-11

MAR 18 1936	
F. B. I.	
U. S. DEPT. OF JUSTICE	
SEARCHED	FILE

Laboratory Report  
Page Two

The handwriting and handprinting contained in this letter and envelope will be compared with that contained in the anonymous letter file in the laboratory and if any identification is made you will be further advised. Photographic copies of this writing will be placed in the anonymous letter file.

THE ORIGINAL EVIDENCE IS BEING RETAINED IN THE LABORATORY FOR USE IN ANY SUBSEQUENT EXAMINATIONS WHICH MAY BE DESIRED. SHOULD YOUR OFFICE DESIRE THIS ORIGINAL EVIDENCE FOR USE IN ANY SUBSEQUENT PROCEEDINGS WHICH MAY DEVELOP THE BUREAU SHOULD BE NOTIFIED IN AMPLE TIME TO PERMIT TRANSMITTAL.

- 1 Bureau
- 2 Los Angeles
- 1 New Orleans
- 1 Laboratory